

REMARKS

Claims 1, 7, 8, 20, 22, 24, 26, 27, 40 have been amended. Claims 2, 3, and 21 have been cancelled. No new claims have been added. Claims 1, 4-13, 20, 22-32 and 40-54 are therefore pending.

Claim Objections

The Examiner objected to claims. This objection is respectfully traversed. The Examiner's concern appears to be the claims' sparing use of punctuation such as colons, commas and semicolons. However, there is no basis in the law, rules or MPEP for making such an objection. In making the objection, the Examiner cited no authority. There is no mention in 37 CFR 1.75 or MPEP § 608.01(i)-(p) or anywhere else about internal punctuation – only a final period is required. Given that the rules specifically encourage internal *indentation*, the rules' silence on internal *punctuation* implies that it is entirely optional. Not only is there no authority for the objection, the Examiner has not even stated that the claims are in any way unclear due to the scarcity of punctuation. Indeed the claims are quite clear. Withdrawal of the objection is therefore respectfully suggested.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 4, 10, 20, 22, 29, 40, 43, 49 and 54 under 35 USC § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent no. 4498146 (Martinez). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The independent claims as amended recite a "virtual hard disk address of a virtual device associated with one of the multiple users." Martinez does not teach this limitation. As such, the independent claims are patentable over Martinez. The dependent claims are patentable by virtue of their dependency on the independent claims.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The Examiner rejected claims 2, 21, 41 under 35 USC § 103 as obvious from Martinez and U.S. Patent no. 5619673 (Wang). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner rejected claims 3 and 42 under 35 USC § 103 as obvious from Martinez, Wang and U.S. Patent Pub. No. 20030110263 (Shillo). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner rejected claims 7, 26 and 46 under 35 USC § 103 as obvious from Martinez, Wang and U.S. Patent No. 5319760 (Mason). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner rejected claims 8, 9, 27, 28, 47 and 48 under 35 USC § 103 as obvious from Martinez, Wang and Japanese Patent Pub. No. 2000-66961 (Hasebe). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner rejected claims 5, 23 and 44 under 35 USC § 103 as obvious from Martinez, and Mason. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner rejected claims 6, 24-25 and 45 under 35 USC § 103 as obvious from Martinez, and U.S. Patent no. 5802604 (Stewart). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner rejected claims 11-13, 30-32, and 50-52 under 35 USC § 103 as obvious from Martinez, and U.S. Patent no. 6799316 (Porterfield). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner rejected claim 53 under 35 USC § 103 as obvious from Martinez, and U.S. Patent no. 6671791 (McGrath). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The additionally cited references fail to cure the deficiencies of Martinez described above regarding the sec. 102 rejection. Therefore, these claims are patentable over the cited combination of references.

Conclusion

It is submitted, however, that the independent and dependent claims include other significant and substantial recitations which are not disclosed in the cited references. Thus, the claims are also patentable for additional reasons. However, for economy the additional grounds for patentability are not set forth here.

In view of all of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and reexamination are respectfully requested and allowance at an early date is solicited.

The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned to answer any questions or to discuss steps necessary for placing the application in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,



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